

THE EARWIG

UPDATES FROM WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM

Dear Members

What a great day we had on Wednesday 25th April at Arlington Arts when we celebrated the WBTC Apprentice Graduation & Rising Stars Awards. This edition covers all of the finalists and winners and has the link to the photos from the event. Remember, you can download the professional photos free of charge thanks to our sponsors. This edition also marks a big development in the history of WBTC as we make plans to join the BCoT (Basingstoke College of Technology) Group. This alliance will give WBTC access to the fantastic resources that BCoT have to offer, especially in the digital learning space while still maintaining our status as an independent charitable provider.



Matt Garvey, Managing Director



THE WINNERS OF OUR 2018 RISING STARS AWARDS

Well done to the finalists in this years Rising Stars Awards 2018. We're so pleased to have seen a great diversity of employers, mentors and learners demonstrating the egalitarian and inclusive nature of work based learning. It was a hard choice but there had to be winners in each category.

Here is a run down of the excellent Rising Stars 2018 as chosen by our judges and celebrated at the event on Wednesday 25th April at Arlington Arts Centre. Congratulations go to our winners and the finalists for making it through such a tough fought process.



The 2018 Rising Stars Award Finalists and Winners

Apprentice of the Year (aged 16-18)

Sponsored by Sovereign Housing
Briony Smith (West Berkshire Council)

Apprentice of the Year (aged 19+)

Sponsored by SPX Flow
Sarah Oakley (Boomerang Creative)

Great Start Learner of the Year

Sponsored by James Cowper Kreston
Samuel Aldridge

Mentor of the Year

Sponsored by Benchmark Furniture
Sheena Sukumaran (Sutherland Health Ltd)

Micro Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Bayer Plc
Sutherland Health Ltd

Small Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Manley Summers
Benchmark

Medium Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Basingstoke College of Technology
Atkins & Potts Ltd

Large Employer of the Year

Sponsored by Newbury Weekly News
James Cowper Kreston

APPRENTICE GRADUATION

What an awesome day we had seeing our apprentices graduate. In front of 250 guests there were 70 graduates who were roused into a state of excitement by our guest speaker Mark Dawe the CEO of AELP (Association of Employment & Learning Providers). Mark reminded everyone that 'learning by doing' is an invaluable experience that underpins the apprenticeship and adds value to the career journey. By drawing upon the expertise and advice of workplace mentors the apprentice develops both in skill and personality accelerating their career potential. After his 'Graduate Address' Mark then formally congratulated each apprentice before they collected their diploma.

A wide range of occupational sectors were represented including accounting, business, carpentry, customer service, engineering, furniture making, housing, IT/Telecoms, management, warehousing and others. Apprentices at intermediate, advanced and higher levels all graduated in front of their employers, family and friends. It was a happy and glorious occasion. Here we're showing just a few images from the ceremony, many more can be viewed via our homepage www.wbtc-uk.com



WBTC APPRENTICE GRADUATION & AWARDS 2018
#wbtcawards18



WEST BERKSHIRE TRAINING CONSORTIUM TO JOIN BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY GROUP

West Berkshire Training Consortium (WBTC) has announced that it will be joining the Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT) group for the ongoing delivery of their services. The move, expected to be formalised during June or July, will allow for continued growth in the apprenticeship market for both organisations and the opportunity to create a bigger regional presence.

WBTC has worked alongside BCoT for many years and the college is a preferred supplier. WBTC places more of their apprentices with BCoT than any other provider or college. Commenting on the exciting new venture WBTC Managing Director Matt Garvey said: "There have been seismic changes in the way apprenticeships are being funded and delivered and we felt this was the right time to join forces with a like-minded organisation, so that we can continue to deliver our mission."

BCoT Principal Anthony Bravo, who has placed apprenticeship growth at the heart of BCoT's strategic plan said: "By joining with WBTC the newly formed group will benefit from having a greater geographical reach, greater expertise and an improved market position due to size and combined reputation. Our aim, with WBTC on board, is to become the leading apprenticeship provider in the south."

Continuity of outstanding service is a priority for both BCoT and WBTC who will continue to operate from their existing bases of Basingstoke and Newbury. Employment and contracting agreements with employees, apprentices and employers will remain unchanged and as a bigger and better organisation there will be increased opportunities

to grow business, allow for wider tendering opportunities as well as creating a much wider, stronger, secure operating footprint for both organisations. The boards of both organisations are undertaking further due diligence and anticipate being able to formalise the arrangement in June. There will be no change to the name of either organisation or their day to day operations.

Letters have gone to our employers, learners and stakeholders. However, if you have any questions about this news then feel free to email matt@wbtc-uk.com



Left to right: David Moir (Deputy Principal of BCoT), Tammera Easterling (CEO of WBTC), Lorraine Heath (Deputy Principal of BCoT) and Matt Garvey (Managing Director of WBTC).

HOW WBTC HELPS LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE AND DISADVANTAGED ADULTS GET INTO JOBS



There is no single cause as to why a young person disengages from Education, Training or Employment. The feelings and attitudes of young people towards education and training are affected by a range of factors, which for some can seem insurmountable. WBTC is proud that we are often, for these young people, the provider that best helps them after previous experiences of rejection.

Some of the young people joining our Elevate West Berkshire and Great Start programmes, have had negative experiences at school or college or both before meeting us at WBTC. Our Summer Programme which starts in July 2018 is one way in which we provide support to ensure that there are opportunities for engagement and progression. The Summer Programme is for any school/college leaver seeking an apprenticeship. We support all levels and abilities and we work intensively with them to help secure their dream job role.

For those a bit further away from the job market we offer Traineeships. These are structured and long term work placements where the young person can gain valuable experience. More often than not the young people we train have literacy and numeracy needs. Ultimately this is an obstacle to any progression to apprenticeships, which require abilities at level 2. A Traineeship can help surmount these obstacles and provide a safe and relevant way into an apprenticeship

At WBTC we want to see young people of all backgrounds secure an apprenticeship. We know that some will do so quickly this summer and others will need extra help and support. The WBTC Summer Programme starts 2nd July 18 and it is a tried and tested way for a young person in West Berkshire to get the support they need to start an apprenticeship.

THE WBTC LEVY MATCHING SERVICE



The last edition of The Earwig highlighted that employers paying the Apprenticeship Levy can transfer up to 10% of their annual funds to other levy paying customers. WBTC is on hand to help matchmake our members so that enterprises with unspent funds can help and support other employers who may have a need to undertake staff development. **Full details can be viewed here.**

Some ideas we have been exploring include transfers to local academy schools to help with the development of their workforce or linking up with public sector levy payers who have increasing demand. A large levy payer may wish to support businesses in their supply chain and thus benefit from increased capacity. WBTC is on hand to support you through the process.

The ESFA have produced a little video to explain how Levy Transfers work, **click here to view it.**

For advice and guidance email matt@wbtc-uk.com

SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR YOUNG ENGINEERS



WBTC & BCoT ENGINEERING SUMMIT

WBTC & Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT) have delivered engineering apprenticeships together for well over 20 years. Achievement rates are over 90% and we combine excellent added value services with great training facilities. It is an example of how two strong providers can collaborate for the benefit of employers. This year we will be offering the new Engineering Apprenticeship Standard. This represents a complete revitalisation of the engineering suite of apprenticeship training and responds to employer demands for a programme that is:

- More bespoke
- Stretching & challenging
- Validated by a final End Point Assessment

In preparation for this, WBTC & BCoT are hosting an Engineering Summit on **17th May 2018** at 200 Longwater Avenue in Green Park Business Park, Reading. Running from 10am til 12 noon, with brunch provided afterwards, the summit will include:

- A presentation on the content and delivery of the new Engineering Standard
- The benefits of moving from the Apprenticeship Framework to the new Standard
- An update on funding, timescales and training venues
- The unique benefits of engineering apprenticeships with WBTC/BCoT

This event is **FREE OF CHARGE**. However, as with our other added value services we will administer a late cancellation/no-show penalty of £50 per person. There is plenty of free parking available. To attend or for more information, please email matt@wbtc-uk.com

APPRENTICE GEORGE NORTH LAUNCHES HIS OWN BUSINESS

Following his graduation where he was also an award finalist, George North of The Grey Matter Group told us about his new business venture. 'I started a business called SpeedyGifts.' Said George 'The skills and knowledge I learned working on my Customer Service apprenticeship was fantastic and there's no doubt this led to my idea of starting a business at only 18. I noticed a gap in the market for customers to receive gifts super-fast with outstanding customer service. I gained so much confidence since starting my apprenticeship, I've been told I'm like a different person! I'm extremely grateful I was given the opportunity to work on my skills and develop into a confident business man. I'm changing SpeedyGifts' business model in June 2018 to not only have awesome gifts and outstanding customer service, but to also have much lower prices. It's unbelievable now I look back at the past couple of years - from leaving school at 17 to getting an apprenticeship then starting a business whilst still working at the same organisation I did my apprenticeship with all within the space of less than two years!'

George's story is an amazing testimony to the power of apprenticeships and it is fantastic that he has set up his own business. We've all been in the position of needing to get a gift to someone faster than the usual post. Perhaps we have forgotten a birthday or even a wedding anniversary and we need to get a gift to someone asap. George's proposition provides a same day service to customers. For more information visit speedygifts.co.uk



SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT DUTY DON'T LET 'HOLIDAY HEAVEN' BECOME 'HOLIDAY HELL'

It's that time of year again when thoughts turn to walks in the sunshine or relaxing by the beach. However, if you're planning a getaway, consider some risks you may face as a consumer, when booking holidays online.



With a view to online safety and consumer rights, holidaymakers are being warned about fraudsters who place false adverts on accommodation websites, conning them out of hundreds of pounds.

Last year, some 4,700 travellers fell victim to such scams, which included fake airline tickets. On average those affected lost £1,500 each in 2017, according to the police, a 25% rise on the year before.

In many cases the fraudsters hack into accommodation websites and ask to be paid directly. But as soon as payment is made, they disappear.



The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is also looking into some of the top hotel booking websites to see if they, too, are breaking the law when it comes to their selling their products.

According to the gov.uk website, they are "concerned about the clarity, accuracy and presentation of information on sites, which could mislead people, stop them finding the best deal and potentially break consumer law."

For advice on seven ways to spot a holiday scams, [click here](#).

If you would like advice and guidance, feel free to contact me martyn@wbtc-uk.com

HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS SIGNS OF DRUG ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

For the majority of employers drug use is not only a matter for gross misconduct; it's also a taboo issue. The mystery, criminality and anti social behaviour associated with drug use makes it a very difficult matter for many employers to deal with. Sometimes, drug abuse can be confused with other issues such as alcohol misuse or mental health issues. This is because some of the symptoms exhibited by a drug user can be similar to those who are dealing with alcoholism or a mental health conditions.

Drug misuse can be a serious problem not only for the misuser but also for the business where they work and, sometimes, for their co-workers. The possession of some drugs is illegal, exposing the misuser to the risk of criminal charges as well as causing harmful effects to their health. You could be breaking the law if you knowingly allow drug-related activities in your workplace and you fail to act. It is just as important to know the implications to both your employees and business of not tackling drug misuse, particularly where safety is involved. Dangers are further enhanced when the drug user drives a vehicle or operates machinery because their judgement and co-ordination can be impaired.

Signs of drug misuse which you might look for include:

- sudden mood changes;
- unusual irritability or aggression;
- a tendency to become confused;
- abnormal fluctuations in concentration and energy;
- impaired job performance;
- poor time-keeping;
- increased short-term sickness absence;



- a deterioration in relationships with colleagues, customers or management;
- dishonesty and theft (arising from the need to maintain an expensive habit).

Remember: all the signs shown above may be caused by other factors, such as stress, and should be regarded only as indications that an employee may be misusing drugs. The HSE produce a useful guide for employers which you can find [here](#).

For WBTC employers with higher risk environments we will send a NEBOSH qualified consultant to support employers. This is our added value service to thank employers for offering work placements.

WORKSHOPS, COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

Most of the training workshops below are free of charge to WBTC members which means apprentices, work place mentors or any of your staff can attend. To book, please use the email address against each event. Spaces go fast so please let us know ASAP if you wish to make a reservation.

We operate a £35 no-show fee for anyone who doesn't attend without notice on any 'free of charge' course. This will be invoiced care of the employer. WBTC have enhanced the confirmation process as follows

- We'll confirm your attendance by email and send a meeting request that you can import to your outlook or webmail calendar.
- We'll confirm your space with your employer and remind you prior to the event.

MAY

ENGINEERING EMPLOYER SUMMIT

Free for all to attend with brunch provided. Please note a charge of £50 will be administered for late cancellation or no show.

Date: Thursday 17th May
10:00 - 13:00
Venue: Green Park, 200 Longwater Avenue, Reading
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for all to attend**



JULY

TIME MANAGEMENT

Do you ever feel there aren't enough hours in the day? Do you cope well with distractions or do you wish you could find yourself in a quiet room so that you can get on with work? This session explores ways in which our time is stolen or lost and how we can win it back to become more effective. It will explore the difference between important and urgent and delegates will be able to identify those scenarios that waste time.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 6th July - 09:30 - 12:30
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £100 for non members



Safety first!

BRITISH SAFETY COUNCIL LEVEL 2 AWARD - HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

This popular one day course is ideal for health and safety purposes and equips delegates with the skills and confidence in the workplace. Full details are on [this link](#).

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 20th July - 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members**
£149 for non members



SEPTEMBER

FIRST AID CERTIFICATE

This qualifications equips staff with the skills to be a nominated 'First Aider'. This is an incredibly useful skill to help keep customers and staff safe from accidents to illness. It is a very popular course so early booking is essential.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 28th September - 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC members** £149 for non members



JUNE

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

This popular module focuses on professional letter writing and emails for a business environment. Attendees will explore good practice and how to avoid looking like an amateur when it comes to commercial correspondence with colleagues, customers and suppliers.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 1st June - 09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC Members**
£100 for Non Members



EFFECTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Bad customer service can destroy the reputation of any organisation. This session explores how all staff can make a positive impression on their customers and raise the effectiveness of the whole organisation. It will explore topics such as professional image, dealing with problems, body language and helping angry & confused customers. This session is particularly useful for customer facing staff who interact face-to-face with clients.

Venue: WBTC
Date: Friday 22nd June
09:30 - 16:00
Contact: matt@wbtc-uk.com
Cost: **FREE for WBTC Members**
£100 for Non Members



WBTC

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